

The Kingdom and the Church

Optional points are marked with "◇". Supplemental Scriptures are in parentheses ().

The Relationship between the Church and the Kingdom

The kingdom should be top priority in our lives..... **Matthew 6:33**

- Peter made repentance and baptism (born again) the keys to both the kingdom and the body of Christ **Matthew 16:13-20, Acts 2:38** (Jn 3:5-8), **1 Cor 12:12-13**
- The kingdom and body are one. The body is the church **Ephesians 1:22-23**

The Bible interchangeably refers to the church, the body and the kingdom. On earth, the church is the representation of the kingdom of heaven, so it is also top priority

The Body of Christ: *pick* the right head, *stick* to the body...**Ephesians 1:22-23**

- *If Jesus is not the head, the body is dead.* We must *stick* with the body to stay alive in Christ. The finger cannot survive apart from the body

Pick the church with Jesus as the Head.....**Ephesians 2:19-22**

- Jesus is the head, if *the Foundation is the Bible*(Ephesians 2:20-22)
 - The church must accurately teach the Word of God(1 Timothy 4:16)
 - Salvation: Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess Jesus is Lord, Be Baptized

If the church does not teach God's plan of salvation, Jesus is not the head

- Jesus is the head, if *the Family is in the Fellowship*.....(Ephesians 2:19)
 - Jesus called God's followers his family members **Matthew 12:48-50**

If the church is not building spiritual, loving relationships, Jesus is not the head

- **Focus on One Body** that has the right foundation and family**Ephesians 4:3-6**
 - Make every effort to be unified with one church
 - Why do over 450 denominations exist in the U.S., alone?
 - There should be no division..... (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)
- We should not hop or shop churches or fellowships. Be united with one church that:
 - *that teaches salvation correctly*
 - *is devoted to building family in the fellowship*

Stick with the body to stay alive in Christ.....**Ephesians 4:1-3**

- Making every effort out of love is called *devotion*

Devoted to the Fellowship

- Church Attendance: Do not miss the meetings of the body**Hebrews 10:23-25**
- God thinks habitually missing church is serious, deliberate sin .. (Hebrews 10:26-31)
- ◇ Be supportive of church leadership and practices..... (Hebrews 13:17, 13:7-8)

Devoted to Faith Partnerships and Discipling

- After we are baptized, we are to be taught to obey everything ... (Matthew 28:18-20)
- New Christians need more training for spiritual maturity..... (Hebrews 5:11-14)
- **Every day** connect with each other at a heart-to-heart level**Hebrews 3:12-13**
- We need to initiate getting discipling so we can mature in building faith partnerships

Devoted to Daily Encouragement

- See the good and encourage each other **every day** (Hebrews 3:12-13)
- Devote time to honoring and loving one another..... **Romans 12:9-10**

Devoted to Small Group Membership

- Serving together as a small group in the mission..... **Romans 12:11-13**

- Practice hospitality: Open our homes to reach out to others
- Small groups should build belonging and family**Romans 12:3-5**
 - We need each other (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

Devoted to Using Your Gifts**Romans 12:6-8**

- Use your gifts in service to God and his church
- Prophesying** and evangelism: Speaking God's Word with vision and faith
- Faithfully speaking God's Word impacts unbelievers..... (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

Serving: Everyone in the church finds a way to serve

- Ushers, Audio/Visual, Children's Ministry, Communications, Worship

Teaching: We need to help each other spiritually(Romans 15:14, Colossians 3:16)

Encouraging: See above "Devoted to Encouragement"

Contributing to meet needs: Giving financially

- Financially, God expects us to be faithful and reliable**2 Corinthians 9:5-8**
 - Planning helps with reliable giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
- At times, collections are made to meet special needs: missionary work, disaster relief, helping the poor, expanding the church (2 Corinthians 8:13-15, Acts 4:34)
- How much should be given? A tithe is good starting point in deciding what to give
- Tithing is the practice of giving the first tenth of your income to God
- Tithing reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God
- ◇ Jesus told the Pharisees they should practice the tithe (Luke 11:42)
- ◇ He commended those who sacrificed financially for the church(Mark 12:41-44)
- ◇ God wants to bless us when we responsibly sacrifice**Malachi 3:8-10**

Leading: We can lead in our areas of strength

Mercy: Helping the poor and needy was part of Christ's mission.....(Matthew 25:31-46)

- From time to time we participate in programs to help the poor locally and worldwide

Devoted to Peace and Unity (Romans 12:18-21)

- We make every effort to live at peace with each other
- Work to resolve matters with people quickly and directly.....(Matthew 5:25-26)
- Involve others when you cannot resolve matters personally..... **Matthew 18:15-16**

◇ **Devoted to Purity** (primarily for the unmarried)

- ◇ We honor one another with our purity (Romans 12:10) **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8**
- ◇ Treat the opposite gender with absolute purity, like family(1 Timothy 5:1-2)
 - Do not be yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)

◇ The call to absolute purity, undivided devotion, being yoked with only believers and for widows to only marry disciples, strongly suggests that it is in the Spirit of Christ to (1) expect disciples to date only other disciples and (2) practice double-dating only disciples so that one another's purity is honored

Conclusion (Galatians 5:6)

- The church helps us to focus on what's important: building faith and loving one another. Let's give church the priority that God envisioned for our lives!